UNITED
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International
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Original: ENGLISH

PREPARATION OF THE INITIAL PARTS OF STATE PARTY REPORTS ("CORE DOCUMENTS") UNDER THE VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

Note by the Secretary-General

1. Each of the bodies established under the various human rights instruments to monitor State party compliance with treaty obligations has adopted guidelines concerning the form and content of State party reports. Since a large number of States are parties to several human rights instruments, it has been an added burden for them to provide certain information of a general character to the various treaty bodies in the form requested by each of them. The General Assembly has repeatedly urged that the reporting burdens of States parties, and duplication, be reduced as much as possible.

2. With a view to facilitating the implementation of reporting obligations by States parties, and with the agreement of all of the treaty bodies, the guidelines of the various treaty bodies relating to the part of States reports containing general information were consolidated into a single text (attached hereto). By a note verbale dated 26 April 1991, the Secretary-General transmitted the guidelines, calling for the preparation and submission of a "core document", to all States that were parties to one or more international human rights instruments. They will also be transmitted to new States parties.

3. The "core documents" received from States parties will be distributed to each of the treaty bodies, together with the substantive report of the concerned State party, when future reports from that State party are to be considered. The "core document" will be updated periodically by the Secretariat as needed, based upon information that may be received from States parties from time to time.

4. Core documents will be issued as addenda to this document.

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

ANNEX

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Consolidated guidelines for the initial part of the reports of States parties

Land and people

1. This section should contain information about the main ethnic and demographic characteristics of the country and its population, as well as such socio-economic and cultural indicators as per capita income, gross national product, rate of inflation, external debt, rate of unemployment, literacy rate and religion. It should also include information on the population by mother tongue, life expectancy, infant mortality, maternal mortality, fertility rate, percentage of population under 15 and over 65 years of age, percentage of population in rural areas and in urban areas and percentage of households headed by women. As far as possible, States should make efforts to provide all data disaggregated by sex.

General political structure

2. This section should describe briefly the political history and framework, the type of government and the organization of the executive, legislative and judicial organs.

General legal framework within which human rights are protected

3. This section should contain information on:

(a) Which judicial, administrative or other competent authorities have jurisdiction affecting human rights;

(b) What remedies are available to an individual who claims that any of his rights have been violated; and what systems of compensation and rehabilitation exist for victims;

(c) Whether any of the rights referred to in the various human rights instruments are protected either in the constitution or by a separate bill of rights and, if so, what provisions are made in the constitution or bill of rights for derogations and in what circumstances;

(d) How human rights instruments are made part of the national legal system;

(e) Whether the provisions of the various human rights instruments can be invoked before, or directly enforced by, the courts, other tribunals or administrative authorities or whether they must be transformed into internal laws or administrative regulations in order to be enforced by the authorities concerned;

(f) Whether there exist any institutions or national machinery with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of human rights.

Information and publicity

4. This section should indicate whether any special efforts have been made to promote awareness among the public and the relevant authorities of the rights contained in the various human rights instruments. The topics to be addressed should include the manner and extent to which the texts of the various human rights instruments have been disseminated, whether such texts have been translated into the local language or languages, what government agencies have responsibility for preparing reports and whether they normally receive information or other inputs from external sources, and whether the contents of the reports are the subject of public debate.